

**REMARKS**

In the Official Action, the Examiner noted a provisional election to continue prosecution of claims 16-25 in the present application, and withdrawal of claims 1-15 and 26-49. Applicant hereby affirms the election of claims 16-25.

The Examiner has next rejected claims 20-25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner objects to the term "mils" in the claims as vague and indefinite. The Examiner states that the recitation is not defined by the claims, that the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree and that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Although Applicant strongly disagrees with the Examiner's assertion, Applicant has nevertheless amended the claims to cancel the term "mils" from the claims and to insert in its stead, thousandths of an inch. It is Applicant's position that the term "mil" or "mils" is commonly recognized term, generally and specifically in the art. In support of this, Applicant submits herewith as Exhibit A, page 753 from Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (Merriam-Webster, 1991) in which the term mil is defined as "a unit of length equal to fraction 1/1000 inch used esp. for the diameter of wire". Applicant submits that the term "mil" is, in fact, specifically defined and is neither vague nor indefinite. Nevertheless, in an effort to reach agreement with the Examiner, Applicant has amended the claims to provide this definitional meaning. Applicant respectfully requests entry of this amendment in the application file and further request that the Examiner withdraw this basis for rejection.

The Examiner has next rejected claims 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Levine, U.S. Patent No. 4,601,958. The Examiner characterizes Levine as disclosing a corrosion-resistant strap comprising a metal base element, the metal base strap element having a width and a thickness defining first and second sides and a pair of edge regions; and a cured powder coating (gold) on the base element. The coating having a substantially

consistent thickness at the first and second sides and at the edge regions. The Examiner goes on to characterize Levine as disclosing a dog-bone profile and as further disclosing that the coating is inherently a melted and cured powder.

Applicant strongly disagrees with the Examiner's characterization of Levine and specifically the characterization of Levine disclosing a "inherently" melted and cured powder.

Levine is directed to plated metal parts and the productions of these parts. Specifically, Levine discloses the layering of a base metal layer with plated layers of nickel and gold. There is nothing in Levine that teaches a melted and cured powder coating. Nor is there anything in Levine that would even remotely suggest to one skilled in the art the use of a melted and cured powder coating on a base metal strap.

The entirety of the disclosure of Levine is directed to electroplating metal parts with sequentially disposed layers of nickel and gold (or nickel alloys and gold alloys). In fact, the entirety of Levine is directed to "plating" processes. Specifically, the description portion of the disclosure, at column 1, beginning on line 62 discloses "electroplating of metal parts such as semiconductor package parts". Further, in column 2, beginning at line 6, the description describes "[t]he most commonly used electroplated coatings on semi-conductor packages are nickel on the bases metal and gold on the nickel ...." Levine teaches that the nickel acts as a defusion barrier to keep the gold from defusing into the bases metal. In addition, Levine teaches only the use of metal platings applied through electroplating processes on the base metal.

Thus, Applicant strongly disagrees with the Examiner's position that Levine anticipates the claimed invention. In addition, Applicant takes issue with the Examiner's "inherent" disclosure of a melted and cured powder. There is nothing whatsoever in Levine that teaches a "melted and cured powder." Nor, as addressed below, does anything in Levine suggest, teach or motivate one skilled in the art to use a "melted and cured powder."

As such, Applicant submits that the rejection under §102(b) is improper and respectfully and earnestly solicits the Examiner's withdrawal of same.

The Examiner has next rejected claims 19-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being

unpatentable over the above-noted Levine reference. In this rejection, the Examiner states that Levine discloses the claimed invention except for the powder coating being of an epoxy material.

The Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide Levine's powder coating with an epoxy material, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. Again, Applicant takes issue with the Examiner's characterization of the disclosure of Levine and further takes issue with the Examiner's conclusion that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply an epoxy coating to the claimed corrosion-resistant strap.

The present invention is directed to a corrosion-resistant coated and cured strap. The strap is formed from an elongated metal strap base element that has a width and a thickness and defines first and second sides on a pair of edge regions. As amended, claim 16 is directed to a melted and cured powder coating on the base element. The coating has a substantially consistent thickness at the first and second sides and at the first and second sides and at the edge regions.

There is simply nothing in Levine that discloses this claimed invention. Particularly, Levine is directed to an electroplating process in which sequential layers or strata of nickel (or nickel alloy) and gold (or gold alloy) are electroplated on to a base metal element. There is simply nothing in Levine that would teach, suggest, or motivate one skilled in the art to apply a melted and cured powder coating on the base element. In fact, Levine teaches only the use of metal as a coating on the base element. There is nothing in Levine that suggests a melted and cured powder coating.

It is common knowledge that the electroplating process utilizes an electrolysis reaction in which chemical changes are effected by the passage of an electric current through a solution. This is clearly distinguished from the present invention which includes a coating that is provided by a melted and cured powder on the base element.

Moreover, it is Applicant's position that for the Examiner to assert that the use of a melted and cured powder coating would have been "within the general skill of a worker in the art to

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select a known material..." is clearly a conclusion bases upon hindsight only made with the present claims in hand during examination. Furthermore, such hindsight is impermissible and does not provide a basis for an obviousness determination. Rather, there must be some teaching, motivation or suggestion in the prior art references that would teach one skilled in the art to make the claimed invention. In the present instance, there clearly is no teaching, suggestion or motivation. As such, it is Applicant's position that the claim rejections under §103 are improper and should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the basis for rejection of the present claims and earnestly solicits early indication of allowance of claims 16-17 and 20-25.

Applicant believes that there is no fee due in connection with the present amendment. If, however, there is a fee due, Applicant requests that this paper constitute any necessary petition and authorizes the Commissioner to charge any underpayment, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 23-0920. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Attached hereto, for the Examiner's convenience, are pages 9-10 entitled "CLAIMS MARKED-UP TO INDICATE CHANGES."

Also attached hereto, for the Examiner's convenience, are pages 11-12 entitled "CLEAN SET OF CLAIMS FOLLOWING ENTRY OF THE PRESENT AMENDMENT".

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Should the Examiner believe that a telephone interview would help expedite prosecution and allowance of the present application and address any matters that may remain following this amendment, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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**CLAIMS MARKED-UP TO INDICATE CHANGES**

16. (Amended) A corrosion-resistant coated and cured strap comprising:  
an elongated metal strap base element, the metal strap base element having a width and a thickness defining first and second sides and a pair of edge regions; and  
a ~~melted and~~ cured powder coating on the base element, the coating having a substantially consistent thickness at the first and second sides and at the edge regions.

20. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 16 wherein the coating has a thickness of about 0.2 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~ to about 5.0 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~.

21. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 20 wherein the coating has a thickness of about 0.6 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~ to about 1.2 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~.

22. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 21 wherein the coating has a thickness of about 0.8 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~.

23. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 17 wherein the coating has a thickness at about the first and second sides of about 0.2 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~ to about 5.0 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~.

24. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 23 wherein the coating has a thickness at about the first and second sides of about 0.6 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~ to about 1.2 [mils] ~~thousandths of an inch~~.

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25. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 24 wherein the coating has a thickness at about the first and second sides of about 0.8 [mils] thousandths of an inch.

**CLEAN SET OF CLAIMS FOLLOWING  
ENTRY OF THE PRESENT AMENDMENT**

16. (Amended) A corrosion-resistant coated and cured strap comprising:  
an elongated metal strap base element, the metal strap base element having a width and a thickness defining first and second sides and a pair of edge regions; and  
a melted and cured powder coating on the base element, the coating having a substantially consistent thickness at the first and second sides and at the edge regions.

17. The corrosion-resistant coated and cured strap in accordance with claim 16 wherein the coating has a greater thickness at about the edge regions and on the first and second sides adjacent the edge regions defining a dog-bone profile.

19. The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 18 wherein the powder is an epoxy material.

20. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 16 wherein the coating has a thickness of about 0.2 thousandths of an inch to about 5.0 thousandths of an inch.

21. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 20 wherein the coating has a thickness of about 0.6 thousandths of an inch to about 1.2 thousandths of an inch.

22. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 21 wherein the coating has a thickness of about 0.8 thousandths of an inch.

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23. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 17 wherein the coating has a thickness at about the first and second sides of about 0.2 thousandths of an inch to about 5.0 thousandths of an inch.

24. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 23 wherein the coating has a thickness at about the first and second sides of about 0.6 thousandths of an inch to about 1.2 thousandths of an inch.

25. (Amended) The corrosion-resistant strap in accordance with claim 24 wherein the coating has a thickness at about the first and second sides of about 0.8 thousandths of an inch.